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ABSTRACT

The United Republic of Tanzania was perhaps the first African country to give urgent attention to adult literacy. One of the immediate results of educating adults was to make them insist that schooling be provided for their children. The literacy campaign that started in 1971 reduced the 1969 illiteracy rate of 69 percent to 9.6 percent in 1986. In addition to the purely educational results, the demand for newspapers and books has increased; literacy participants have adopted health, nutrition, and balanced diet practices; their employment opportunities have increased; and the nation's political culture has been built. The Ministry of Education directs the literacy campaign through its Department of Adult Education and regional, district, divisional, and ward adult education coordinators. The language understood throughout the country is Kiswahili. Functional literacy primers that deal with subjects related to socioeconomic activity have been developed. Radio programs, newspapers, and audiocassettes have also been widely used in the literacy campaign to recruit volunteers and motivate adult learners. Some objectives of post-literacy programs are, to: (1) ensure that the level of literacy reached is maintained; (2) create a literate environment in rural areas through libraries, newspapers, and correspondence education; and (3) develop democratic and cooperative attitudes and skills among adults. Adult educators are trained at the Institute of Adult Education, the University of Dar-es-Salaam, and all teachers colleges. (CML)

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LITERACY LESSONS

CE 055 145

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

A nationwide literacy campaign: the Tanzanian experience

by Z.J. Mpogolo

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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INTRODUCTION

The United Republic of Tanzania was perhaps the first African country to give urgent attention to adult literacy. President Nyerere was adamant that literacy could not wait for all the children to grow up. Paradoxically, however, this emphasis upon adult education accounted for a great deal of the rapid progress in primary education. One of the immediate results of educating adults was to make them insistent that schooling be provided for their children. The pressure for primary education proved irresistible. Elected officials clamoured for schools for their communities and contributed to building them.

I stress this point because there are those who argue that governments must make choices – schooling for children or literacy programmes for adults. But reality proved both more paradoxical and more rewarding. A synergism developed – the more adult education was extended, the stronger proved the pressure for primary schools. The United Republic of Tanzania's progress towards universal primary education has received great benefit from the attention given to the education of parents. Is there a lesson here for other countries?

The nationwide literacy campaign arose through a process of overall national socio-economic development within the policy of Ujamaa (socialism) and self-reliance.

The five-year development plans for 1964–1969 and 1969–1974 were vital instruments for shaping the literacy campaign. The second five-year development plan, which came after the adoption in 1967 by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) of the Arusha Declaration, was particularly directed towards mass education, with the objective of enabling people to

become both knowledgeable and capable of transforming their own environment.

The nationwide literacy campaign in the United Republic of Tanzania was announced on 31 December 1969, and 1970 was declared Adult Education Year.

> *Although there has been a lot of talk about education for adults and quite a lot of people have been working in this field, we have not really organized ourselves for a major attack on ignorance. The central committee of TANU has decided that we must do this in 1970. The coming twelve months must be Adult Education Year and we must give this work a very high priority.*
>
> Extracts from President Nyerere's speech on the occasion of launching the National Literacy Campaign.

In September 1971 TANU resolved that, using methods for teaching functional literacy, illiteracy should be eradicated throughout the country within a period of four years for every person above the age of 10.

Literacy campaign: process and major achievements

The literacy campaign took the form of a major effort inspired by a strong desire for change, commitment and participation on the part of the whole nation.

The ruling party TANU – now Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) – played a vital role in mobilizing learners, administrators, supervisors, teachers and volunteers. More than 10% of the nation's annual education budget was allocated to adult education and literacy, and an extensive infrastructure for adult education was established throughout the country.

During the campaign, classes were – and still are – conducted in all possible locations, for example in schools, in specially constructed centres, health centres, co-operative buildings, offices, factories and under the shade of trees in the open. Classes meet three times a week for two hours each day. Each class enrols thirty adult learners. The enrolment figures leaped from 261,309 in 1970 to 5,184,982 in 1975 and to 6,068,373 in 1980. They then declined to 4,079,531 in 1985 and to 4,010,241 in 1988.

These efforts enabled the United Republic of Tanzania to reduce its illiteracy rate from 69%, according to the 1967 census, to 39% in 1975. In 1981 it had plunged to 21% and then to 15% in 1983 and 9.6% in 1986. However, this decrease in the percentage of illiterate persons did not keep pace with the corresponding reduction in the enrolment to literacy courses, for the following reasons:

- Adults who did not pass the national literacy tests were enrolled into literacy classes the next year.
- Primary school drop-outs who had reached 14 years and above were enrolled in literacy classes for adults.

- Illiterate refugees from neighbouring countries increased the number of illiterate adults in the United Republic of Tanzania.

As a result of the literacy campaign, individual adults have changed their attitudes, their way of thinking and feeling. They have lost their state of marginality, alienation and fear, and now participate freely in various political and economic planning, decision making and implementing activities – from the village to the national level. Through literacy classes, political awareness has been created. The literacy campaign has improved the use of standard Kiswahili among adults and has developed reading habits and motivation to acquire new knowledge. The campaign has contributed to universal primary education such that in 1981 enrolment reached 97% of all primary school-age children. Under the influence of the campaign, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme was launched. Since 1981 the percentage of school-age children enrolled in primary education has slightly declined for various reasons, though remaining high (76.1% in 1988).

In addition to this purely educational result, a remarkable increase in demand for newspapers and books in both rural and urban areas has been observed. A noticeable number of literacy participants have adopted health, nutrition and balanced diet practices. Consumption of cooking fat, soap, bread and butter, etc. has increased.

The campaign has contributed to the improvement of employment opportunities for many, as the teaching, supervision and administrative workforce required expansion.

In social terms, it can be stated that the most important outcome of the national literacy campaign appeared to be the building of the nation's political culture.

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Organization and supervision of literacy activities

The ground for the Tanzanian literacy campaign was prepared by the UNDP Work-Oriented Adult Literacy Pilot Project (WOALPP, 1968–1972). The WOALPP and its successor, the Tanzania/UNDP/Unesco Functional Literacy Curriculum, Programmes and Materials Development Project, played a big role in literacy work. In 1976, when international assistance stopped, a National Literacy Centre was established with the following specific roles:

- to train specialists in literacy work;
- to establish the concept of work-oriented functional literacy by producing and testing a variety of learning materials;
- to develop methods, strategies and structures to implement literacy programmes in the Tanzanian context, including organization and supervision of the field work and collection of data on the programme.

Central direction of the literacy campaign is provided by the Ministry of Education through its Department of Adult Education. There are also regional, district, divisional and ward adult education coordinators.

The existing system of coordination ensures participation in planning and implementation of adult education programmes by learners, teachers, supervisors, adult education coordinators, party and government organizations, and private agencies, through adult education committees set up from the regional to class levels.

The National Council of Education advises the Minister for Education and draws its members from the party, government ministries, independent and private organizations. There is also a sub-committee on adult education.

Apart from programmes conducted by the Ministry of Education, there are other ministries, institutions and organizations that organize functional literacy pro-

jects such as: the malaria control project; the health education campaign; the cotton project; the maize project; the afforestation campaign; the improved housing campaign; the AIDS control campaign, etc.

THE EDUCATIONAL OUTLOOK

The United Republic of Tanzania is fortunate to have one language which is understood throughout the country – Kiswahili. During the literacy campaign, twelve primers were developed in Kiswahili, and their validity and suitability were tested by the UNDP/Unesco Project. Each subject was covered in two primers, graded as I and II. Participants were required to read primers I and II dealing with a particular subject related to their principal socio-economic activity.

The primers are:

1. *Political Education I and II*
2. *Home Economics I and II*
3. *Better Cotton Growing I and II*
4. *Better Tobacco Growing I and II*
5. *Better Banana Growing I and II*
6. *Better Coffee Growing I and II*
7. *Better Fishing I and II*
8. *Better Cattle Keeping I and II*
9. *Better Maize Growing I and II*
10. *Better Rice Growing I and II*
11. *Better Coconut Growing I and II*
12. *Better Cashewnuts Growing I and II*

The home economics and agriculture oriented primers included demonstration guides for making practical demonstrations.

The primers were written during workshops attended by experts in methodology, language, graphics and layout, book production, and in the subject matter of the primer. The UNDP/Unesco functional literacy project in Mwanza was responsible for developing, editing, printing and testing all the primers.

The main characteristic of Tanzanian functional literacy primers is that they start off with simple, meaningful sentences carrying functional messages. The sentences are taught first, then broken down into words, and finally into syllables. The syllables are used to form or generate new words already in the daily vocabulary of the adult learners. Writing and numeracy are integrated into the teaching of reading in the early stages – usually after the third or fourth lesson. Learning materials are provided free of charge to learners. Adults with poor eyesight are provided with spectacles.

Role of radio and other mass-media

Radio stations have been widely used in the literacy campaign to develop and produce radio programmes which motivate and sustain the enrolment of adult learners, as well as the recruitment of voluntary teachers. They also provide continuous in-service training for teachers and supervisors, and lessons for learners to develop literacy by initiating radio discussion groups which provide a two-way communication channel between the campaign and the field.

Three main series of radio programmes were designed:

- A motivational series (called 'Literacy by radio') explaining the importance of functional literacy and encouraging people to participate in the eradication of illiteracy.
- An educational series on agriculture and home life topics, ('Advance yourself') reinforcing the functional literacy primers, and answering questions put by the radio forums.
- A series aimed at literacy teachers known as 'Teacher of teachers'.

In addition to these, a range of publicity and promotion activities has been undertaken through the mass-media.

- Radio and newspapers were required to publicize all activities undertaken, e.g. literacy enrolment figures, ceremonies for awarding certificates, speeches and interviews by politicians and educationists.
- Competitions were organized all over the country for schools and literacy groups to compose songs and poems on literacy, and the winners were awarded prizes. Songs and poems were broadcast by Radio Tanzania and published in newspapers.
- Some songs were recorded on cassettes and distributed to literacy groups.
- Literacy classes competed on attendance records, the number of literacy graduates, the construction of literacy classrooms, and in the writing of letters. These competitions were conducted at national, regional and district levels.
- Schools, colleges, social institutions and military camps competed on the number of literacy centres, literacy learners and graduates they could claim.
- Regional competitions were conducted and assessment was made on enrolment, literacy graduates, and efficient reporting. A literacy flag was prepared and was awarded to the best region each month throughout the year.
- Textile companies manufactured clothes bearing the literacy emblem and sold them on the open market to publicize the literacy campaign.
- Stamps were produced to publicize the literacy campaign.
- A competition was organized to overcome the shortage of suitable reading materials for neo-literates. The writers whose manuscripts were judged first and second in each category were awarded prizes.

Radio programmes based on all these literacy activities were recorded on tapes by education experts at the Literacy Project Office in Mwanza and broadcast by Radio Tanzania in Dar es Salaam.

Literacy tests

Nationwide literacy tests have been carried out since 1975. They were conducted and designed by a national committee and administered by testing groups composed of representatives of the Party, government, social organizations, colleges of education, the army, the university and religious organizations. The materials were organized around five levels of competence of those tested (below level I; levels I to IV).

Reports

All adult education co-ordinators at regional, district, division and ward levels submit quarterly reports to higher authorities. All reports follow special guidelines given by the Ministry of Education.

Attendance registers

Quarterly reports are gathered from class attendance registers. Reports include the name of the literacy class, the date it started, literacy sessions held and the number of people attending.

Inspectors' reports

Inspectors of schools, stationed at zonal and district offices, are responsible for inspecting literacy classes. All inspectors' reports are sent to the Ministry of Education for administrative, professional and follow-up purposes.

Field visits

Members of staff at the Ministry of Education are each assigned a region whose literacy activities they should closely monitor by making regular visits. Education officers at the regional level each monitor a district and

In the Tanzanian context, literacy levels I to IV are defined as follows:

Level I:

A participant who has enrolled but must have attended two-thirds of the literacy sessions in any one year of literacy activities.

Level II:

A participant who has already qualified for level I above, but who has also successfully passed one or both tests for the following sub-levels:

- Sub-level (i):

A person who is able to recognize words and/or symbols, write the letters of syllables, write numbers and/or arithmetical signs including mental calculations.

- Sub-level (ii):

A person who is able to read a short, simple, meaningful sentence, who is able to write a simple, short sentence and who can add and subtract a one-figure sum.

Level III:

A person who has already qualified for level II above, but who has also successfully passed one or both tests for the following sub-levels:

- Sub-level (i):

A person who is able to read a short, simple, meaningful sentence, who is able to write a simple, short sentence and can add and subtract two-figure sums.

- Sub-level (ii):

A person who shows mastery over symbols in their written form, or is able to encode and decode written messages. Such a person shuld be able to read fluently a simple text with understanding (the text itself being based on common syllables and vocabularies in functional primers and according to the most frequent syllables and vocabularies used in the Swahili language). He/she should also be able to write a simple, short message or passage; to add and subtract three-figure numbers; to multiply two-figure numbers; and to divide by one figure.

Level IV:

A person who continuously uses the acquired literacy skills. Such a person should have already qualified for level III above, but should also be able to read and write messages; to read a newspaper in order to keep up with current events and obtain information; to read 'How to do it yourself' books, short books on better ways of farming, etc.; to keep records; and solve simple arithmetical problems. He/she should also be able to keep a simple book of accounts on income and expenditure.

Participants who achieve levels III and IV in reading, writing and arithmetic taken together are considered as literacy graduates, while those who achieve level IV are considered in addition to be functionally literate.

those at the district level should supervise wards and visit class centres from time to time.

Evaluation reports

Five nationwide evaluation reports have been established in the course of the literacy campaign. Reports obtained have been used to plan subsequent literacy and post-literacy programmes. Separate evaluation has also been carried out on radio education programmes, rural newspapers, rural libraries and folk development colleges.

POST-LITERACY PROGRAMMES

Both literacy and post-literacy programmes are conceived and developed as a continuous process. The specific objectives of post-literacy programmes are:

- To ensure that the level of literacy reached is maintained and to prevent the neo-literates from relapsing into illiteracy.
- To create a literate environment in the rural areas through a network of libraries, newspapers, folk development colleges, correspondence education, radio programmes, cinemas and development campaigns.
- To provide an alternative system of educational advancement for primary and secondary school drop-outs, and for the adult population in general.
- To enable adults to broaden their knowledge of the official and national language - Kiswahili - and English as the second official language.
- To provide political education to adults.
- To improve the knowledge and skills of adults in such fields as agriculture, handicrafts, home economics, health and water supply.

THE ORIGINAL POST-LITERACY PROGRAMME

The old post-literacy curriculum had a package of eleven subjects covering Kiswahili, political education, mathematics, home economics, health, agriculture, crafts, geography, history, political economy and English. However, it was found that this curriculum was not adequately meeting the needs of adult learners. The following shortcomings were observed:

- *Levels V to VII were misleading neo-literates who were equating their academic achievements with those of standards V to VII in the primary school of the formal sector.*
- *The curriculum content was academic instead of the learner-centred approach that would help them solve their socio-economic problems.*
- *There was no smooth transition from functional literacy to post-literacy programmes.*
- *Curriculum materials did not sufficiently take into account the importance of providing women with appropriate tools and equipment for making their work easier.*

- To give adults an understanding of simple national economics and economic geography.
- To give adults mathematical knowledge useful in their daily activities.
- To develop democratic and co-operative attitudes and skills among adults.
- To help adults develop leadership skills and attitudes.
- To help adults achieve a wider understanding of the world.

Post-literacy strategies include the provision of textbooks, rural newspapers, rural libraries, correspondence education, evening classes, week-end schools, documentary films, instructional radio programmes and folk development colleges.

Originally the post-literacy programmes had three further stages – V, VI and VII – as a continuation of the literacy levels I to IV. However, a new post-literacy curriculum organized around the lower, intermediate and higher levels has recently been announced. The

aim was to rectify the shortcomings of the previous curriculum.

Thus equal provisions for women have been emphasized, as well as appropriate technology suitable for the rural population. The new curriculum covers three subject areas:

- agriculture and animal husbandry;
- home economics and health;
- crafts.

Each level of the new programme has textbooks and teachers' guides. Supplementary readers and reference books are provided. Special centres for the new post-literacy curriculum have been established; each district has four centres dealing respectively with agriculture, animal husbandry, home economics and health, and two centres for crafts. Workers' education programmes are included within the literacy and post-literacy programmes, enabling employees to improve their vocational and professional skills, and to secure better qualifications for an upward mobility.

As in the case of literacy programmes proper, the mass media are playing an important role in post-literacy educational provision, especially in rural areas. Practical examples can be found in rural libraries

FOLK DEVELOPMENT COLLEGES

The folk development colleges were established in 1975 under the Department of Adult Education, Ministry of Education. They provide lifelong educational facilities to both literacy graduates and school-leavers of all grades. An FDC is an adult education centre where training is provided in a specific field of learning to meet the developmental needs of a district, or a group of districts. Courses offered by the FDCs are usually 60% practical and 40% theoretical.

Folk development colleges each have a rural library and receive a copy of each rural newspaper. Other activities conducted by FDCs include radio discussion groups and courses for literacy, as well as training sessions for post-literacy teachers and supervisors.

whose premises are used for radio discussion groups; they also receive a copy of each zonal rural newspaper. Correspondence course learners use rural libraries for reference work. As well as publicizing these correspondence courses, rural newspapers make announcements in favour of rural libraries, folk development activities and post-literacy textbooks, and they also reproduce the text of radio education programmes. Rural newspapers are also used to support the face-to-face classroom teaching by publishing various topics covered in the adult education curriculum, for example, health practices, agricultural techniques and crafts skills, adopting a do-it-yourself approach.

The folk development colleges (FDCs), of which there are fifty-two, are particularly active in providing post-literacy activities.

TRAINING OF LITERACY WORKERS

The Institute of Adult Education started offering diploma courses in adult education in 1969. Graduates were employed as adult education co-ordinators or workers' education officers. The University of Dar-es-Salaam conducts degree courses for adult education administrators and tutors in colleges of education. Training in adult education methodology is offered in all teachers' training colleges to those aspiring to teach in primary schools. Additionally, permanent regional training teams are established in each region to train functional literacy teachers, most of whom are volunteers. These teams are composed of regional adult education co-ordinators, Ujamaa and co-operative officers, adult education tutors from teachers' colleges, agriculture officers, secondary school teachers and national service leaders.

CONCLUSION

The reasons leading to the success of the literacy campaign in the United Republic of Tanzania are historical. The foundations were firmly laid by a decade of political developments. The Tanzanian developmental ideology found a bold and clear expression in the Arusha Declaration of 1967. The UNDP/Unesco Work-oriented Adult Literacy Pilot Project provided a smooth beginning, while the materials developed by it followed basic principles of functionality, acceptable to the culture of the targeted audience, and provided relevant knowledge that would help them solve their urgent and immediate problems. Thus it became a people's campaign that would help them improve their standard of living. After the campaign, follow-up programmes providing in-depth content were designed with the objective of transforming society.

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The International Bureau of Education acknowledges with grateful thanks this contribution by Z.J. Mpogolo to the cause of Literacy. Mr Mpogolo is a Principal Secretary and Director of Adult Education in the Ministry of Education, United Republic of Tanzania.

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